



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH**  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2023

23-041

### Department of Health announces second O'ahu measles case

HONOLULU, HI. The Department of Health (DOH) has confirmed a case of measles in an O'ahu resident who was exposed to the previously confirmed case in an international traveler reported on April 10, 2023. DOH has identified and is reaching out to persons who may have been exposed to this second case. In a Medical Advisory issued today, the DOH asks healthcare providers to identify, isolate, and report suspected measles cases. Measles is a vaccine preventable illness. Healthcare providers and the public are urged to check their vaccination status to ensure they are up to date.

Staying up to date on routine vaccines, including the measles vaccine (usually first given at the one-year well-child visit as the MMR combination vaccine against measles, mumps, and rubella), protects our keiki and the larger community from outbreaks of measles. The last measles outbreak in Hawaii occurred in 2014, with 15 cases reported.

Globally and nationally, MMR coverage rates have dropped since pre-pandemic years, increasing the number of susceptible individuals. This secondary case is an unfortunate reminder that measles is highly contagious and can easily spread to unprotected persons.

"Healthcare providers and the public are encouraged to be more aware and vigilant for a possible measles infection due to recent cases in our community," said Immunization Program Branch Chief, Ronald Balajadia. "We are seeing increases in measles outbreaks globally, including recent cases reported in American Samoa." Mr. Balajadia noted the two recent cases in Hawai'i are not related to any cases in American Samoa.

Measles is a very contagious disease caused by a virus. It spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Measles may start with fever, followed by cough, runny nose, and red eyes. Then a rash of tiny, red spots breaks out. It starts at the head and spreads to the rest of the body.

Measles can cause serious illness, including pneumonia, neurologic complications, and even death. Infants under 1 year of age are at particularly high risk because they are too young to be vaccinated against measles. However, measles vaccine may be recommended for children between 6 months and 1 year of age if they are exposed to a known case. In this situation, measles vaccine can prevent the infant from becoming infected and suffering potentially severe complications of measles.

If you think you have symptoms consistent with measles, or have been exposed to an individual with measles, isolate yourself immediately, seek medical advice, and be sure to contact your healthcare provider to receive instructions to avoid further spread of disease.

More information about measles is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>.

# # #